

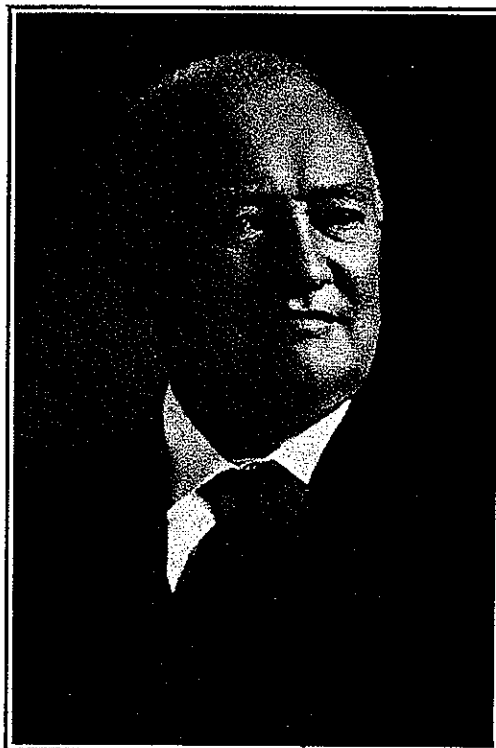
EUGENE ETIENNE TACHÉ, I.S.O.

Eugene Etienne Taché (1836-1912) was a member of an old and most distinguished Canadian family, and in fact was in direct lineal descent from the great explorer, Louis Joliet, (1645-1700), who, with Father Marquette, in 1673, made his famous voyage down the Mississippi River from Wisconsin to Arkansas, and first made known to the civilized world the magnificence of that great waterway.

Eugene Etienne Taché was born (25th October, 1836) at St. Thomas, in the County of Montmagny, Quebec, the eleventh child of Dr. Etienne Paschal Taché who was, in 1856-57, and again in 1864-65, as Sir Etienne Taché, Prime Minister of Canada.

Charles Taché (1752-1826), the father of Sir Etienne, was co-seigneur of Mingan, and his brother, Paschal Jacques Taché, (1757-1830), was seigneur of Kamouraska.

The father of these two brothers, Jean Paschal Taché (1697-1768) came to America from southern France—southeast of Bordeaux—in the eastern part of what formerly was the ancient Province of Guienne. He arrived at Quebec for the first time in 1727. He was a son of Etienne Taché of St. Malo, who was baptized at Garganvillars—a commune in Guienne—on the 14th January, 1666, and ever since that time the name Etienne (Stephen) has been in very frequent use in each succeeding generation of the Taché family—Jean Paschal Taché was the pioneer of the family in Canada—or New France. He soon established himself as one of the most successful merchants and traders in the Colony. By the time Quebec was besieged by the English in 1759 he had become one of the wealthiest men in Canada but he was ruined by the



war. During the Summer of 1759 seven of his ships, laden with merchandise, were captured by the English, and during the siege of Quebec his house—with all its contents, books of account, promissory notes, securities for money, and property of all kinds—was set on fire by the bombardment, and totally destroyed.

After the battle on the Plains of Abraham M. Taché, as one of the principal men of the city, took a very considerable part in arranging the terms of capitulation.

In 1742 he married Marie Anne, daughter of Jean Joliet de Mingan, and Jean Joliet was a son of Louis Joliet. Sir Etienne Taché was a grandson of this marriage and his grandmother was a granddaughter of Louis Joliet, the explorer.

The Most Reverend Alexander Antonin Taché, O.M.I., (1823-1894), the distinguished and eminent Archbishop of St. Boniface, who was consecrated a bishop in 1851, at the age of 28 years, was a nephew of Sir Etienne Taché, being a son of Sir Etienne's oldest brother.

When the War of 1812 broke out Sir Etienne Taché, though not yet 17 years of age, volunteered at once for active service. He became a Lieutenant and took part in several engagements—especially in the naval battle on Lake Champlain, near Plattsburg, N.Y. (11th September, 1814). After the conclusion of peace he studied medicine in Quebec, and afterwards in Philadelphia, and in 1819 was licensed to practise in Canada. Married in 1820, he established himself as a medical man in the parish of St. Thomas de Montmagny—his birthplace—and successfully practised medicine there for 22 years.

During the troubles of 1837-38 Dr. Taché openly sympathized with Papineau—the French-Canadian leader,—and his residence at St. Thomas was, in the Doctor's absence, entered by the police and searched.

In 1841, after the union of the two Canadas, Dr. Taché was elected to the Legislative Assembly as Member for L'Islet, and from that date till his death in 1865, was continuously a Member of Parliament, having been appointed, in 1848, to the Legislative Council, or Upper House. In the Baldwin-Lafontaine administration of 1848 he was Commissioner of Public Works, having been elected for that position by Sir Louis Hippolyte Lafontaine, his colleague and intimate personal friend. From 11th March, 1848, when this administration was formed, Sir Etienne Taché was continuously a Minister of the Crown in each successive Government till his resignation as Prime

Minister on 25th November, 1857. In 1856 he formed the Taché-Macdonald Administration, with himself as Prime Minister, Minister of Crown Lands and Speaker of the Upper House. In 1858 he was in England and at Windsor Castle, received the honour of knighthood from Queen Victoria, in person. In 1862 he was made a Commander of the Order of St. Gregory, the Great (military class) by His Holiness Pope Pius IX. In March, 1864, a second Taché-Macdonald Administration was formed, with Sir Etienne Prime Minister, Receiver-General and Minister of Militia. In October, 1864, he presided at the Quebec Conference and, though dangerously ill, attended all the sittings.

On Sunday, 30th July, 1865, he died at his residence in St. Thomas, aged 70 years.

Sophie, Lady Taché, his widow, survived till 1883.

There were fifteen children of the marriage. Lady Taché was born at Quebec on 18th January, 1800, a daughter of Joseph Baucher dit Morency, navigator, and of Marie Angélique Fraser, a descendant of heroic Scottish Highland soldiers who fought so valiantly on the Plains of Abraham at Quebec against the no less brave and heroic ancestors of Sir Etienne Taché.

Mgr. Taché—the Archbishop—on one of his visits to Rome, was asked by His Holiness Pope Pius IX many questions about Canada and Canadian public men. Sir Etienne Taché, an uncle of the Archbishop, was Prime Minister of Canada at the time, and the Pope asked about his family and how many children he had. "Fifteen, Holy Father," Mgr. Taché replied. "Fifteen," said the Pope, "why, that's better than Jacob. He only had twelve."

The trait of absent-mindedness was a marked characteristic in both the father and the grandfather of Sir Etienne Taché, and many anecdotes illustrating this peculiarity are cherished in the family.

On one occasion, in church, M. Jean Paschal Taché was sitting, deep in profound thought, when a young lady collecting alms for the poor, came to him, presenting her collection box. M. Taché in utter absentmindedness thought someone was offering him snuff, and putting out his hand to take a pinch, took instead a piece of silver out of the box. The young lady laughingly whispered to him, "But it is money I am asking from you." "Ah," said he, "I wouldn't have thought that."

M. Charles Taché, Sir Etienne's father, and M. Paschal Taché, seigneur of Kamouraska, Sir Etienne's uncle, were equally absent minded. They were together with a number

of the Province of Quebec—"Je me Souvien"—the full significance of which cannot perhaps be readily expressed in English words but which may be paraphrased as conveying the meaning "We do not forget, and will never forget, our ancient lineage, traditions and memories of all the past".

In 1903, King Edward VII recognized the worth and merit of M. Taché as a distinguished public servant by bestowing upon him the honour of Companionship in the Order of the Imperial Service, I.S.O.

In all the labours of his lifetime M. Taché showed himself to be a conscientious, faithful, industrious and assiduous worker, neglecting nothing, but giving attention to the smallest detail no less than to the most important.

M. Taché died at Quebec on 13th March, 1912, and is buried in the Cemetery of Ste. Catherine, County of Portneuf, in the Seigniorial burial plot of the Duchesnay family.

On 22nd October, 1879, M. Taché married, at Quebec, by his second marriage, Maria Clara, daughter of the Honourable Antoine Juchereau Duchesnay, and of this marriage ten children were born—seven of whom died in infancy or in early childhood. Three daughters are still living.

I. Marie Louise, Madame Paquet, wife of Lieut.-Col. Etienne Théodore Paquet, Advocate. They are father and mother of five children, of whom the eldest married M. René Boisvert, Advocate.

The children of Col. and Madame Paquet are:

1. Marie Louise Emma Claire (Madame Boisvert).
2. Marie Nathalie Hélène.
3. Joseph Alphonse Etienne Théodore, Lieutenant, Royal Canadian Regiment.
4. Alexandre Jules Maurice, Lieutenant, deceased.
5. Marie Thérèse.

Madame Paquet is very active in social and political work. During the late war she was Secretary of the Soldiers' Wives' League. She is Secretary of the Women's Conservative Association of the City and District of Quebec.

II. Marguerite Marie Elisabeth, Madame Hèbert, wife of Maurice Hèbert, now Quebec Government Publicist. They have five children, Anne, Claude, Jean, Marie, Pierre.

III. Marie Claire Hélène, Madame Fregasse, wife of Michel Fregasse, Civil Engineer, and mother of seven children—Dominico, Guido, Gilles, Gilda, Mario, Mona, Roma.

For much of the information contained in this sketch the writer is indebted to M. Pierre Georges Roy, Quebec Archivist, and to his printed book, "La famille Taché, Levis, 1904."